



# **Integrated quality and enhancement review**

**Summative review**

**The Manchester College**

**June 2012**

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## **Preface**

The mission of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) is to safeguard the public interest in sound standards of higher education qualifications and to inform and encourage continual improvement in the management of the quality of higher education. As part of this mission, QAA undertakes reviews of higher education provision delivered in further education colleges. This process is known as Integrated quality and enhancement review (IQER).

## **Purpose of IQER**

Higher education programmes delivered by further education colleges (colleges) lead to awards made by higher education institutions or Edexcel. The awarding bodies retain ultimate responsibility for maintaining the academic standards of their awards and assuring the quality of the students' learning opportunities. The purpose of IQER is, therefore, to safeguard the public interest in the academic standards and quality of higher education delivered in colleges. It achieves this by providing objective and independent information about the way in which colleges discharge their responsibilities within the context of their partnership agreements with awarding bodies. IQER focuses on three core themes: academic standards, quality of learning opportunities and public information.

## **The IQER process**

IQER is a peer review process. It is divided into two complementary stages: Developmental engagement and Summative review. In accordance with the published method, colleges with less than 100 full-time equivalent students funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), may elect not to take part in Developmental engagements, but all HEFCE-funded colleges will take part in Summative review.

## **Developmental engagement**

Developmental engagements explore in an open and collegial way the challenges colleges face in specific areas of higher education provision. Each college's first, and often their only, Developmental engagement focuses on student assessment.

The main elements of a Developmental engagement are:

- a self-evaluation by the college
- an optional written submission by the student body
- a preparatory meeting between the college and the IQER coordinator several weeks before the Developmental engagement visit
- the Developmental engagement visit, which normally lasts two days
- the evaluation of the extent to which the college manages effectively its responsibilities for the delivery of academic standards and the quality of its higher education provision, plus the arrangements for assuring the accuracy and completeness of public information it is responsible for publishing about its higher education
- the production of a written report of the team's findings.

To promote a collegial approach, Developmental engagement teams include up to two members of staff from the further education college under review. They are known as nominees for this process.

## Summative review

Summative review addresses all aspects of a college's HEFCE-funded higher education provision and provides judgements on the management and delivery of this provision against core themes one and two, and a conclusion against core theme three.

Summative review shares the main elements of Developmental engagement described above. Summative review teams however, are composed of the IQER coordinator and QAA reviewers. They do not include nominees.

## Evidence

In order to obtain evidence for the review, IQER teams carry out a number of activities, including:

- reviewing the college's self-evaluation and its internal procedures and documents
- reviewing the optional written submission from students
- asking questions of relevant staff
- talking to students about their experiences.

IQER teams' expectations of colleges are guided by a nationally agreed set of reference points, known as the Academic Infrastructure. These are published by QAA and consist of:

- *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ), which includes descriptions of different higher education qualifications
- the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (*Code of practice*)
- subject benchmark statements, which describe the characteristics of degrees in different subjects
- guidelines for preparing programme specifications, which are descriptions of what is on offer to students in individual programmes of study
- award benchmark statements which describe the generic characteristics of an award, for example Foundation Degrees.

In addition, Developmental engagement teams gather evidence by focusing on particular aspects of the theme under review. These are known as 'lines of enquiry'.

## Outcomes of IQER

Each Developmental engagement and Summative review results in a written report:

- Developmental engagement reports set out good practice and recommendations and implications for the college and its awarding bodies, but do not contain judgements. Recommendations will be at one of three levels -essential, advisable and desirable. To promote an open and collegial approach to Developmental engagements, the reports are not published.
- Summative review reports identify good practice and contain judgements about whether the college is discharging its responsibilities effectively against core themes one and two above. The judgements are confidence, limited confidence or no confidence. There is no judgement for the third core theme, instead the report will provide evaluation and a conclusion. Summative review reports are published. Differentiated judgements can be made where a team judges a college's

management of the standards and/or quality of the awards made by one awarding body to be different from those made by another.

Colleges are required to develop an action plan to address any recommendations arising from IQER. Progress against these action plans is monitored by QAA in conjunction with HEFCE and/or the college's awarding body/ies as appropriate. The college's action plan in response to the conclusions of the Summative review will be published as part of the report.

## Executive summary

### The Summative review of The Manchester College carried out in June 2012

As a result of its investigations, the Summative review team (the team) considers that there can be **confidence** in the College's management of its responsibilities, as set out in its partnership agreements, for the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of its awarding bodies. The team also considers that there can be **confidence** in the College's management of its responsibilities, as set out in its partnership agreements, for the quality of learning opportunities it offers. The team considers that reliance **can** be placed on the accuracy and/or completeness of the information that the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

### Good practice

The team has identified the following **good practice** for dissemination:

- the Vice Principal and Higher Education Managers provide very effective leadership which has created a coherent and effective structure for the management of the College's higher education, including the robust quality assurance arrangements which enable the enhancement of its higher education
- the considerable opportunities for staff development and engagement with employers which enable staff to maintain currency and professional standards
- the College's detailed mapping of Quality Code guidelines into programme design, and particularly the alignment of work placement documents for each programme to the precepts in the *Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning*
- the comprehensive learning and teaching observation process which is effectively incorporated into the College's staff appraisal system
- the active inclusion of employers and private sector professionals in programme design and execution and the resulting development of innovative practice of high quality
- the comprehensive arrangements for the recruitment and subsequent support of students from a wide variety of backgrounds which is effective in promoting the College's widening participation strategies
- the comprehensive involvement of students in the provision of feedback on their programmes and the thorough training of student representatives
- the combination of high quality human and physical specialist resourcing in a variety of professional contexts
- the comprehensive amount of information, including policies and procedures, student profiles and examples of student work which is easily accessible on the College website
- the involvement of students in the research and design process of College promotional material and the navigation process for the website.

### Recommendations

The team also makes some recommendations for consideration by the College and its awarding bodies.

The team considers that it is **desirable** for the College to:

- provide effective student-enabled Wi-Fi facilities on all campuses
- continue the development of interactive programme handbooks to improve consistency and ensure currency and student ownership of the handbooks.

## A Introduction and context

1 This report presents the findings of the Summative review of higher education funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) conducted at The Manchester College (the College). The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the College discharges its responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes which the College delivers on behalf of Edexcel, Edge Hill University, Leeds Metropolitan University, Liverpool John Moore's University, Manchester Metropolitan University, Northumbria University, the University of Bolton, the University of Manchester, the University of Salford, the University of Huddersfield and the Open University Validation Services. The review was carried out by Professor David Eastwood, Mrs Dorothy McElwee, Mr Millard Parkinson (reviewers) and Mr Alan Nisbett (coordinator).

2 The Summative review team (the team) conducted the review in agreement with the College and in accordance with *The handbook for Integrated Quality and Enhancement Review* (the handbook), published by QAA. Evidence in support of the Summative review included documentation supplied by the College and awarding bodies, meetings with staff, students, employers and partner institutions, reports of reviews by QAA and from inspections by Ofsted. In particular, the team drew on the findings and recommendations of the Developmental engagement in assessment. A summary of findings from this Developmental engagement is provided in Section C of this report. The review also considered the College's use of the Academic Infrastructure, developed by QAA on behalf of higher education providers, with reference to the *Code of practice*, subject and award benchmark statements, the FHEQ and programme specifications.

3 In order to assist HEFCE to gain information to assist with the assessment of the impact of Foundation Degree awards, Section D of this report summarises details of the Foundation Degree programmes delivered at the College.

4 The Manchester College is the largest further education college in the UK, with more than 80,000 students based on a number of campuses in the Greater Manchester area, and with a turnover of £180 million. The College's mission is 'To raise aspirations, expectations and achievements to enable economic success and social inclusion within the City of Manchester and beyond, by delivering world class education and vocational training for individuals, communities and employers'.

5 The higher education provision is an integral part of the College's mission and strategic plan. It aims to enable local people to overcome barriers and access vocationally relevant higher level qualifications in a supportive local college environment. The College does this by working in close partnership with higher education institutions, local and national employers and other stakeholders, ensuring that provision meets priorities identified by Sector Skills Councils and that it maintains the College's standards in learner-centred flexibility and responsiveness. In 2011-12 the College offered the following higher education programmes, listed under the relevant awarding body and with full-time equivalent student numbers in brackets.

### **Directly funded provision:**

#### **Edexcel**

- HNC Business Studies (38)
- HNC Computing (11)
- HNC Construction (21)



- HNC Performing Arts (Theatre) (13)
- HND Business Studies (92)
- HND Computing (30)
- HNC Dance (12)

### **Edge Hill University**

- FD Sports Coaching (36)

### **Leeds Metropolitan University**

- BA (Hons) Musical Theatre Studies (93)
- BA (Hons) Acting for Live and Record Media (50)
- FD Contemporary Theatre Practice (16)

### **Liverpool John Moore's University**

- MA Strategic Human Resources (13)
- BA (Hons) Interactive Media (18)

### **Manchester Metropolitan University**

- FD Enterprise Computing (25)
- FD International Fashion Marketing (30)
- FD Business with Marketing (19)
- FD Business and Management (40)
- FD Business and Human Resource Management (21)
- FD Public Services (18)
- FD Event Management (20)
- FD New Media (25)
- FD Television and Film Production (32)
- FD Photography and Digital Imaging (25)
- FD Animation (18)
- FD Graphic Design and Advertising (22)
- FD Fashion and Clothing Technology (39)
- FD Jewellery and Applied Art (22)
- FD Travel and Tourism Management (11)

### **Northumbria University**

- BA (Hons) Accounting and Finance (39)

### **Open University Validation Services**

- FD Computer System Support (41)
- FD Computer Network Security (30)
- FD Computer Network Management (47)

### **University of Bolton**

- BSc Media and Creative Business (13)
- FD Sport and Fitness Management (20)
- FD Design - Media Make-up (73)

## Integrated quality and enhancement review

- FD Digital Graphics (22)
- FD 3D Visualisation (4)
- FD 3D Character Animation (6)

### University of Manchester

- BA (Hons) Musical Theatre Studies (93)
- BA (Hons) Acting Studies (30)

### University of Salford

- FD Exercise, Health and Fitness (21)
- FD Event Management (41)
- FD Broadcast TV (32)
- FD Radio Production (36)
- FD Music Industries Management (63)
- FD Popular Music and Production (84)

### Indirectly funded provision:

#### University of Huddersfield

- Postgraduate Certificate in Education (35)
- Certificate in Education (51)
- BA (Hons) Education and Training (7)

## Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies

6 The College has partnership agreements in place for validated programmes from:

- University of Salford
- Manchester Metropolitan University
- University of Manchester
- Edge Hill University
- Leeds Metropolitan University
- University of Northumbria
- Liverpool John Moore's University
- University of Bolton
- Open University Validation Services.

## Recent developments in higher education at the College

7 The Manchester College has a significant portfolio of higher education courses and is the seventh largest further education college in terms of directly funded HEFCE provision. For the academic year 2011-12, the College has 1,492 directly funded and 93 indirectly funded full-time equivalent students. The provision consists of eight level 4/5 programmes (Certificates of Education (Cert Ed) and Higher National Certificates/Diplomas (HNC/Ds)), 31 Foundation Degrees (FDs), eight honours programmes and two postgraduate programmes, with a total of 1,406 students enrolled on full-time programmes and 192 students enrolled on part-time programmes.

## **Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission**

8 Following training in November 2011, the Higher Education Student Representatives gathered feedback from their peers and a group of them met to write the student written submission which accompanied the College self-evaluation. The training was unique in providing the student representatives with a role description, together with accompanying responsibilities. The submission was clear and comprehensive and covered all the main areas in summative review; together with the meeting held during the review visit, it was very helpful to the team.

## **B Evaluation of the management of HEFCE-funded higher education**

### **Core theme 1: Academic standards**

#### **How are responsibilities for managing and delivering higher education standards delegated within the management structure and what reporting arrangements are in place?**

9 The College works in close partnership with higher education institutions, local and national employers and other stakeholders to ensure the College provision meets Sector Skills priorities. The Vice Principal for Curriculum Progression has responsibility for the strategic direction of higher education. The Higher Education Management Team is responsible to the Principalship for the strategic development, effectiveness and quality of the College's higher education, represents the College externally and works with curriculum managers to ensure that provision is aligned to the College Mission and Higher Education Strategy. The team judged that these responsibilities and roles were being discharged with skill and effectiveness.

10 The Higher Education Management Team comprises a Director, four Higher Education Managers and a Higher Education Administrator. The Higher Education Management Team monitor targets and funding, develop policies and procedures, and work to support departmental managers and teaching staff in a variety of ways, including provision of staff development. The Higher Education Management Group is made up of a multidisciplinary team of academics and support staff and plays a key role in coordination and quality enhancement. It provides effective support for the higher education operational structure on a cross-college basis thereby enhancing consistency of practices. A range of agenda items is discussed including student support, resources, quality assurance and improvement, targets, funding, marketing and curriculum development. This group meets monthly and reports to the Higher Education Quality Improvement Group which monitors the provision with the Principalship.

11 Higher education committees have clear terms of reference and responsibilities with regular meetings to develop and manage the provision and implement the quality assurance and quality improvement recommendations of the Higher Education Quality Improvement Group. Curriculum Lead Managers manage departments which are divided into Curriculum Divisions led by Divisional Lead Managers. The Divisional Lead Managers have management responsibility for the programme teams who meet termly and align the delivery of the provision to awarding body requirements.

12 The College's partnership agreements with its higher education institution partners clearly specify the roles and responsibilities of both parties for the management of the higher

education provision. These roles include that of the College link tutor who is normally the College programme leader, the validating partner link tutor, and the associated committees for the management of the provision. The validating partner has overall responsibility for the academic standards of the provision and guides the College on quality assurance, procedures and practices.

13 The College has a well-developed and embedded quality cycle involving several structures and processes. The Programme Review, Evaluation and Planning reporting process is a three-phase in-year review providing the opportunity for continuous self-improvement. The subsequent reports are validated by the Higher Education Managers to ensure the quality and effectiveness of the review process. They form the basis for the Higher Education Institution Annual Monitoring Reports which are completed jointly by the College and its validating partner, with feedback provided to programme teams. The Departmental Review, Evaluation and Planning Reports form the basis of the Higher Education Self-Assessment Report, which is completed by the Higher Education Management Group and sent to the Higher Education Quality Improvement Group, the College Quality Improvement Group, the Principalship and the Governing Body. The team concludes that the Vice Principal, Higher Education Managers and Higher Education Management Group provide very effective leadership and have created a coherent and effective structure for the management of the College's higher education, including robust quality assurance arrangements that reflects good practice.

### **What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?**

14 The self-evaluation states that the higher education quality system is based on best practice and the requirements of the *Code of practice*, and meets the precepts of the IQER process. It further claims that the Academic Infrastructure underpins all aspects of its higher education provision. In doing so it is incorporated into programme design, validation, review and operational procedures. The team found good evidence of the College's involvement with the Academic Infrastructure in the design of its policies and procedures for higher education. These are reviewed regularly and, where necessary, updated or improved to reflect more closely the precepts of the *Code of practice*. Programme specifications, the higher education assessment strategy and the higher education staff academic handbook also take account of the Academic Infrastructure.

15 Assessment processes are governed by a range of systems that assure academic standards and these have been mapped to the *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students*. The College has undertaken a review of this section of the *Code of practice* and this has informed the development of the Assessment Strategy for Higher Education. The precepts of the assessment strategy are clearly outlined in the staff academic handbook.

16 The learning and teaching strategy is designed to promote a consistent and coherent approach to higher education learning and teaching. The strategy is linked to key College documents and takes account of the Academic Infrastructure through its links to the *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students*, the FHEQ and awarding body regulations. The College delivers specific staff development focused on the Academic Infrastructure, for example the changes to the Assessment Code of Practice disseminated to higher education staff.

**How does the College assure itself that it is fulfilling its obligations to ensure that the standards of higher education provision meet the requirements of the awarding bodies?**

17 The regulatory framework of each awarding body determines the academic standards of the award. The College takes account of the requirements of the awarding body through its recently revised policies and procedures for higher education which are published in the academic handbook. All staff are required to familiarise themselves with College policies and procedures by accessing the higher education folder on the College intranet. The internal validation and awarding body validation events confirm requirements for the programme, including resourcing. College staff and their partner institutions liaise on moderation matters to assure academic standards through cross-marking and moderation events.

18 The College's quality cycle incorporates a monitoring and review process which provides an appropriate reporting mechanism to allow awarding bodies to check that their requirements are being met. The College complies with awarding body requirements through a number of reporting channels, including external examiner reports, the higher education management reviews, the Programme Review Evaluation and Planning reports, boards of study review meetings and the student voice.

19 External examiners are appointed by the awarding body and the relationship between curriculum teams and external examiners is an integral part of ensuring that the College is successfully meeting the requirements of its validating partners. The higher education managers ensure that all external examiners' comments have been reviewed and actions implemented as part of the Programme Review and Evaluation Planning Reports validation process. A Senior Moderators group assures the standards of learning and teaching and moderates and supports teaching observers.

20 The final Programme Review Evaluation and Planning Reports inform the higher education institution annual monitoring report providing the opportunity to confirm requirements are being met. The Departmental Review Evaluation and Planning reports are informed by the programme reports and ultimately inform the higher education Self-Assessment Report, which is submitted to the Quality Improvement Group, Principalship and Governing Body. Higher education programmes follow the procedures of the relevant awarding body for course continuation review every five years. The team concludes that the College has robust quality assurance arrangements which enables the enhancement of its higher education provision.

### **What are the College's arrangements for staff development to support the achievement of appropriate academic standards?**

21 Staff development needs are identified through Learning and Teaching observations, staff appraisal, Programme, Review and Evaluation Planning reports and curriculum teams. The College has a clear policy on support for scholarly activity to ensure currency of practice and the maintenance of academic standards.

22 The College, through its Higher Education Strategy, seeks to provide support for continuing professional development and the acquisition of subject-specific higher qualifications to inform pedagogical development. Staff development is delivered to all higher education staff to ensure a consistent approach to meeting academic standards. Staff development days are available to all higher education staff biannually. These address QAA developments, internal policies and priorities, and facilitate the sharing of good practice to further develop the higher education ethos.

23 Staff delivering higher education are significantly engaged with employers, as practitioners and through industrial liaison activities. These offer continuous professional development and support the maintenance of academic and industry standards. The team found evidence of collaborative links between the Foundation Degree in Design Media Make

Up and the Foundation Degree in Fashion Design Technology in preparation for the Birmingham Clothes Show Live where the College exhibited their clothing and accessory products for marketing to potential students and for sales. This provides evidence of students work achieving industrial standards, facilitating continuous professional development for staff and further developing the higher education network across the College. The team concludes that the considerable opportunities for staff development and engagement with employers enables staff to maintain currency and professional standards and demonstrates good practice.

**The team concludes that it has confidence in the College's management of its responsibilities as set out in its partnership agreements for the management and delivery of the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of its awarding bodies.**

## **Core theme 2: Quality of learning opportunities**

### **How are responsibilities for managing the quality of learning opportunities for higher education programmes delegated within the management structure and what reporting arrangements are in place?**

24 The responsibilities for managing the quality of learning opportunities reflect those for managing Academic Standards, as described in paragraphs 9 to 13. The respective divisions of responsibility are clear and effective. At the operational level, management of learning opportunities is cascaded down through Departments, led by Curriculum Lead Managers, to Curriculum Divisions, managed by Divisional Lead Managers, who are responsible for programme teams and quality assured programme delivery which meets the awarding body requirements. Each division has an allocated Higher Education Manager to provide mentoring and support to programme teams and to ensure the equal and appropriate management of learning opportunities across all campuses, a system which is effective in practice.

### **How does the College assure itself that it is fulfilling its obligations to its awarding bodies to ensure that students receive appropriate learning opportunities?**

25 The College's written contracts with partner universities are monitored by the Director of Higher Education for their currency and accuracy. The memoranda of agreement define the expectations for the quality of the learning opportunities and are assured through initial site visits and scrutiny of programme documentation at validation and revalidation events.

26 College programmes are managed locally by curriculum teams with an allocated link tutor at the higher education institution, and a Higher Education Manager assigned at the College. Curriculum teams attend boards of study and annual review meetings at the higher education institution to review in-year progress and consider proposals for changes and amendments. There are also effective regular processes of informal telephone and email liaison between link tutors and College programme managers.

### **What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?**

27 As stated in paragraphs 14 to 16, the Academic Infrastructure underpins all aspects of the higher education provision and is fully incorporated into programme design, validation, review and operational procedures. All validated programmes require programme and unit

specifications that reference subject and Foundation Degree benchmark statements and FHEQ-level descriptors. The College's detailed mapping of Quality Code guidelines into programme design, and particularly the alignment of work placement documents for each programme to the precepts in *Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning*, is good practice.

### **How does the College assure itself that the quality of teaching and learning is being maintained and enhanced?**

28 As noted in paragraph 29, the College has an effective quality review cycle to support the maintenance of teaching and learning standards. The College Higher Education Strategy commits the College to support staff professional development in order to enhance pedagogical practices.

29 The College has a comprehensive learning and teaching observation process, which includes a specific higher education-focused grading of teaching staff by managers and peer observers, and the identification of good practice and areas for development. A senior moderators group ensures standards of learning and teaching, and trains, moderates and supports observers. The learning and teaching observation process is effective in forming a basis for individual staff action planning and review. The learning and teaching observation process represents good practice, both for its comprehensive nature, and for the way in which it is effectively incorporated into the College's staff appraisal system.

30 The College has recently set up a Higher Education Learning, Teaching and Assessment Group consisting of higher education teaching staff with a record of good practice. It focuses on improving higher education teaching quality within the College and in developing a culture of continuous improvement through peer observation and sharing good practice. The College's Teacher Education Department provides training for this group to help them to support other higher education staff, and provides effective workshop assistance for all higher education staff at annual summer staff development days. The College has also implemented, and is expanding, a mentoring scheme to support and coach staff using expert practitioners.

31 The College has strong strategic and operational links with employers, national and local professional networks and the vocational employability agenda. The result of this is the innovative engagement of students with employer-led assessment briefs and close and regular exposure to applied and professional employability skills. The active inclusion of employers and private sector professional practitioners in programme design and execution represents an area of good practice.

### **How does the College assure itself that students are supported effectively?**

32 The College Strategic Plan gives a clear commitment to widen participation, and student support arrangements reflect this. The College Guidance and Welfare Service has been awarded the Matrix standard and provides guidance for students on financial and pastoral matters. Higher education students with additional learning needs have access to good support through the College's Dyslexia, Visual and Hearing Impairment Services. In meetings with the team, students confirmed the effectiveness of the welfare services. The comprehensive arrangements for the recruitment and subsequent support of students from a wide variety of backgrounds are effective in promoting the College's widening participation strategies and represent good practice.

33 All students are allocated a personal tutor who is responsible for overseeing individual academic development, including personal development planning, and pastoral care. Students identified as at risk are referred to campus-based Student Support Groups and, if necessary, to the Guidance and Welfare Services. Teaching staff also provide informal academic support. Students confirmed the effectiveness of the personal tutor system, and the ready availability of tutors and other teaching staff for additional informal support.

34 Student feedback on the quality of teaching and learning is collected in a number of ways. These include module evaluations, semi-annual student surveys, monthly focus groups and the National Student Survey. Information is also collected from student representatives who are elected at a programme level. The student representatives receive two days of training in October and provide feedback at programme, site, Boards of Study and HE Management Group meetings. A Facebook group has recently been developed to enable student representatives to communicate and work together more effectively across campuses. Students, including representatives, confirmed that their feedback is appreciated and acted on. Higher Education Manager Focus Groups are used to gather qualitative as well as quantitative student feedback on a range of issues and may result in the formation of working groups with student involvement; one such working party is currently reviewing support for dyslexic learners. The comprehensive involvement of students in the provision of feedback and the thorough training of student representatives represents good practice.

35 Student feedback is also gathered to provide unstructured involvement in programme development; for example in devising module formative assessment opportunities and quality enhancement discussions in script or performance developments. There is an active involvement of students in module and programme development.

### **What are the College's arrangements for staff development to maintain and enhance the quality of learning opportunities?**

36 The College has a comprehensive college-wide approach to staff development that includes a wide range of continuing professional development activities. Continued professional development is effectively reviewed annually at programme level within the Programme Review Evaluation and Planning Report process. Individual staff development needs are identified through the Learning and Teaching Observations and staff appraisal. There is a central process for requesting funding and time for staff development, and specific higher education requests from both curriculum lead managers and individuals are approved by the Vice Principal Curriculum Progression.

37 In line with recommendations from the Higher Education Academy, all higher education teaching staff either have, or are working towards, a higher education-specific PGCE/Cert Ed. The College holds compulsory higher education staff development days in December and July designed to enhance the quality of learning opportunities through training workshops and the sharing of good and effective practice.

38 New College staff receive a programme of induction, administered by human resources staff and curriculum lead managers, which includes familiarisation with higher education quality systems and the nature of linkages with validating institutions. Support is provided by a mentoring system with new appointees assigned to an experienced subject specific mentor.

### **How does the College ensure the sufficiency and accessibility of the learning resources the students need to achieve the intended learning outcomes for their programmes?**



39 The College Higher Education Strategy identifies the importance of providing high quality resources for students. The sufficiency and appropriateness of learning resources is considered and evaluated at internal and external validation events. There is a clear and effective annual planning cycle identified through the Management Review and Departmental Review Evaluation and Planning processes for the allocation of learning resources.

40 External examiners have the opportunity to comment on the appropriateness of learning resources. Their comments are considered in Programme Review Evaluation and Planning reports, supported by appropriate action plans. External examiners' reports and institutional reviews regularly comment positively on the quality of learning resources available to students. The College's Library Resource Centres provide opportunities for private study and access to subject-specific resources. Opening hours meet the needs of day and evening students. Online library resources, including Athens, e-books and e-journals, are available both remotely and on campuses. Students confirmed the sufficiency of these resources. On some programmes, students are also able to access the validating university's online resources.

41 Student views on learning resources are collected through surveys, focus groups and student representatives. Overall, student feedback concludes that higher education students would like a more tangible higher education/university-type experience, including being centrally located with other higher education students on a main site. During meetings with the team, students concurred with survey responses expressing dissatisfaction with the absence of student-enabled Wi-Fi facilities. The College recognises this problem, and is working to address it. The team consider it desirable that student-enabled Wi-Fi facilities are provided on all campuses.

42 The College employs a mixture of full time permanent staff and part-time professional practitioners. This latter group enhances the teaching and learning environment to provide students with an awareness of social and work settings in the Greater Manchester area. Students from different disciplines are brought together to work in professional settings on joint projects, which result in real-life outcomes, for example stage productions, fashion shows and marketing briefs.

43 The College possesses a number of outstanding specialist physical learning resources, such as the Arden theatre. These specialist resources are utilised in conjunction with a combination of well-qualified full-time College staff, and part-time specialist practitioner staff. The combination of high quality human and physical specialist resourcing in a variety of professional contexts and the incorporation of professional resourcing and practical cross-disciplinary collaboration represents good practice.

**The team concludes that it has confidence in the College's management of its responsibilities for the quality of the learning opportunities as required by the awarding bodies to enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.**

### **Core theme 3: Public information**

**What information is the College responsible for publishing about its HEFCE-funded higher education?**

44 The College is responsible for producing a University and Degree Level Prospectus which is revised annually. The 2012 prospectus is available on the College website. Titles on the website and College UCAS site are current and correct. The Prospectus contains full details of tuition fees; these are not included in the same detail on the UCAS site. The hard copy, when delivered to the prospective applicant's home, comes with a part-time higher education application form which contains useful information about English Language qualifications.

45 The School Leaver prospectus includes information on progression to higher education at the College and the Adult prospectus has information on Access to Higher Education programmes. The College website contains brief details of curriculum content and assessment for each programme. It provides comprehensive generic information including financial advice, links to partner universities, case studies of graduates, a video gallery of recent events and student work and links to relevant College policies and procedures. The College also produces individual course leaflets which are produced to a common template and monitored in the same way as other programme information. The comprehensive amount of information easily accessible on the College website is good practice.

46 The College produces a Higher Education Staff Academic Handbook which contains all useful information for staff delivering higher education programmes. This is produced by the Higher Education Management Team and updated annually.

47 Student Programme handbooks and module handbooks are produced to a standard format by programme teams. They are checked by Curriculum Lead Managers and monitored by the College Media and Marketing Officer. Handbooks provide a comprehensive amount of information including a useful section on access to College policies. There are some inconsistencies in the range of content and depth of information in programme handbooks. The format of module handbooks varies between programmes. In order to improve the consistency and standards of handbooks, examples of good handbooks are shared with staff at Staff Development days. Students indicated that they found handbooks useful, that they contained all necessary information and that they referred to them throughout their studies. The College is developing interactive handbooks for each programme intended to give students greater ownership and involvement with handbooks. The team considers it desirable for the College to continue the development of interactive programme handbooks to improve consistency, ensure currency and student ownership of the handbooks.

48 Graphic design students were involved in researching and creating College promotional material to be used at education exhibitions which would be more attractive to potential applicants. Students were also involved in creating the navigation process to the higher education section of the College website. The involvement of students in the research and design process of College promotional material and navigation process for the website is good practice.

49 The College produces a range of comprehensive documents for placement providers. There is a Staff Guide to Work Experience which outlines responsibilities on placement of students, employers and the College. Each programme produces a work placement document which identifies all placement providers, placement activities, assessment and responsibilities. This is aligned to the precepts in the *Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning* and is good practice.

50 Higher education staff at the College are working closely with their colleagues delivering further education courses to develop the skills and abilities of learners studying at the College with a view to ensuring high percentages of internal progression in line with the

widening participation mission of the College. Managers monitor the performance of internally progressing learners using management information data and other reports with a view to improving the information, advice and support offered to learners prior to applying for admission to higher education as well as the curriculum and assessment while on course. The clear and supportive information available to College further education learners raises aspiration, achievement and progression and adds value to the learner experience.

**What arrangements does the College have in place to assure the accuracy and completeness of information the College has responsibility for publishing?  
How does the College know that these arrangements are effective?**

51 There is a clear and effective process for assuring the completeness and accuracy of information. The College marketing unit produces the prospectus and course leaflets on the basis of information it collects from programme teams, curriculum area teams and other sources. These are reviewed by the higher education management team who verify the accuracy and currency of information. A similar process is in place for information on the College website and UCAS site. All public information in the prospectus, website and UCAS site is approved by the College higher education management team and ultimately signed off by the Principal. Information about university awards is sent to the relevant university for approval prior to publication, in line with partnership agreements.

52 There is a College Policy and Guidance document on IT Usage and Safeguarding for Staff and a Student Information and Communication Technology Acceptable Use Policy which cover all aspects of the use of internet and social networking technology. These are being further developed as use of these technologies increases. These are available to students on the College intranet and in some programme handbooks, and are discussed with students when these technologies are used.

**The team considers that reliance can be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.**

## **C Summary of findings from the Developmental engagement in assessment**

53 The Developmental engagement in assessment took place in May 2011. The lines of enquiry were as follows.

**Line of enquiry 1:** How does the College ensure that assessment practices promote learning and facilitate improvement?

**Line of enquiry 2:** How does the College ensure that industry related skills and knowledge are incorporated in its assessment?

**Line of enquiry 3:** To what extent is the information that the college publishes about its assessment practices and procedures accurate, clear, consistent and comprehensive?

54 The Developmental engagement team identified a number of areas of good practice, including the Higher Education Assessment Strategy being instrumental in ensuring that appropriate standards are set and verified in assessment; some examples of innovative methods of assessment, for example, the use of live debates among students on the FD Event Management programme, and the range and appropriateness and innovative nature

of many assessment methods in work-related settings which promote relevant professional and industry standard skills. The FdA in Popular Music and Production module and assignment pack, which provides students with clear general details of assessment on the programme and more specific details for each module together with guidelines to improve grades, was also identified as good practice, as were the partnerships with local and regional employers which contribute considerably to the design and delivery of relevant and industry standard assessment and to the range and appropriateness of many assessment methods in work-related settings. The team also identified as good practice the high proportion of teaching staff who are industry practitioners, which enhances their professional currency and directly informs assessment, programme design and delivery, the rigorous internal validation processes which verify the accuracy of assessment information in submitted documentation, through module specifications, programme handbooks and programme specifications.

55 Recommendations included the advisability of addressing, as part of the internal verification process, the comments of the external examiners for the HNC Construction and FdSc Computer Systems Support programmes that some feedback did not accurately reflect the marks given and that students with widely differing marks were given similar feedback, reviewing the grading of group work to ensure equity, fairness and realism and the desirability of publishing an amended version of the Higher Education Assessment Strategy and making it available to students on the virtual learning environment.

## **D Foundation Degrees**

56 The College's higher education provision has been based heavily on the development of Foundation Degrees and these constitute the major part of this provision. Currently the College offers the following Foundation Degrees:

- Sports Coaching
- Contemporary Theatre Practice
- Enterprise Computing
- International Fashion Marketing
- Business with Marketing
- Business and Management
- Business and Human Resource Management
- Public Services
- Event Management
- New Media
- Television and Film Production
- Photography and Digital Imaging
- Animation
- Graphic Design and Advertising
- Fashion and Clothing Technology
- Jewellery and Applied Art FD Travel and Tourism Management
- Computer System Support
- Computer Network Security
- Computer Network Management
- Sport and Fitness Management
- Design - Media Make-up
- Digital Graphics
- 3D Visualisation
- 3D Character Animation
- Exercise, Health and Fitness

- Event Management
- Broadcast TV
- Radio Production
- Music Industries Management
- Popular Music and Production.

All the conclusions below are applicable to these Foundation Degrees.

## E Conclusions and summary of judgements

57 The team has identified a number of features of good practice in the College's management of its responsibilities for academic standards and for the quality of learning opportunities of the awards the College offers on behalf of its awarding bodies. This was based upon discussion with staff and students and scrutiny of evidence provided by the College and its awarding bodies.

58 In the course of the review, the team identified the following areas of **good practice**:

- the Vice Principal and Higher Education Management Team provide very effective leadership which has created a coherent and effective structure for the management of the College's higher education, including the robust quality assurance and improvement arrangements which enable the enhancement of its higher education (paragraphs 9 and 13)
- the considerable opportunities for staff development and engagement with employers which enable staff to maintain currency and professional standards (paragraph 23)
- the College's detailed mapping of Quality Code guidelines into programme design, and particularly the alignment of work placement documents for each programme to the precepts in the *Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning* (paragraphs 27 and 49)
- the comprehensive learning and teaching observation process which is effectively incorporated into the College's staff appraisal system (paragraph 29)
- the active inclusion of employers and private sector professionals in programme design and execution and the resulting development of innovative practice of high quality (paragraph 31)
- the comprehensive arrangements for the recruitment and subsequent support of students from a wide variety of backgrounds which is effective in promoting the College's widening participation strategies (paragraph 32)
- the comprehensive involvement of students in the provision of feedback on their programmes and the thorough training of student representatives (paragraph 34)
- the combination of high quality human and physical specialist resourcing in a variety of professional contexts (paragraph 43)
- the comprehensive amount of information, including policies and procedures, student profiles and examples of student work which is easily accessible on the College website (paragraph 43)
- the involvement of students in the research and design process of College promotional material and the navigation process for the website (paragraph 48).

59 The team also makes some recommendations for consideration by the College and its awarding bodies.

60 The team considers that it is **desirable** for the College to:

- provide effective student-enabled Wi-Fi facilities on all campuses (paragraph 41)
- continue the development of interactive programme handbooks to improve consistency, ensure currency and student ownership of the handbooks (paragraph 47).

61 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, other documentary evidence and from its meetings with staff and students, the team concludes that it has **confidence** that, in the context of this Summative review, the College discharges its responsibilities effectively, as set out in the relevant partnership agreements for the management of the standards of the awards of its awarding bodies.

62 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, other documentary evidence and from its meetings with staff and students, the team concludes that it has **confidence** that, in the context of this Summative review, the College discharges its responsibilities effectively, as set out in the relevant partnership agreements for the management of the quality of learning opportunities to enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

63 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, other documentary evidence and from its meetings with staff and students, the team concludes that, in the context of this Summative review, reliance **can** be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

The Manchester College action plan relating to the Summative review: June 2012						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
In the course of the Summative review the team identified the following areas of good practice that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the Vice Principal, and Higher Education Managers provide very effective leadership which has created a coherent and effective structure for the management of the College's higher education, including the robust quality assurance arrangements which enable the enhancement of its higher education (paragraphs 9 and 13)</li> </ul>	<p>Continually review the effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Higher Education provision with a view to further improving the robust quality assurance arrangements</p> <p>Devise and deliver training to promote ownership and innovation among all higher education staff</p>	June 2013	<p>Vice Principal Curriculum Progression and Quality</p> <p>Director of HE HE Managers Curriculum Teams</p>	Continually improving standards of provision; the higher education experience at the College meets and exceeds the needs and expectations of all stakeholders	Quality Improvement Group; Principalship; Governing Body	<p>Learner Voice: Satisfaction Survey</p> <p>External examiner reports</p> <p>Employer feedback</p> <p>Peer feedback through networking, conferences etc</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the considerable opportunities for staff development and engagement with employers which enable staff to maintain currency and professional standards (paragraph 23)</li> </ul>	<p>Annually review staff development and employer engagement on all higher education programmes to ensure it is current, appropriate and succinct with a view to improving the learner experience</p>	<p>April 2013</p>	<p>Curriculum Managers</p>	<p>Increased real-life working opportunities for all learners; increased professional currency for all learners</p> <p>Achieving agreed targets regarding recruitment, achievement and progression for learners</p>	<p>HE Management Group Principalship; Governing Body</p>	<p>Human Resource staff development records</p> <p>Employer engagement opportunities</p> <p>Appraisal records</p> <p>Learner Voice: Satisfaction Survey</p> <p>Staff evaluation / satisfaction survey</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the College's detailed mapping of Quality Code guidelines into programme design, and particularly the alignment of work placement documents for each programme to the precepts in the <i>Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning</i> (paragraphs 27</li> </ul>	<p>Mapping of all relevant Quality Code guidelines/precepts across all HE programmes</p>	<p>December 2013</p>	<p>HE Managers Curriculum Teams</p>	<p>All programmes meet the precepts of the Quality Code Evidence is available through mapping</p>	<p>HE Management Group</p>	<p>Quality of documentation and activity evaluated through the management review; reports of HE managers to HE Quality Improvement Group</p>



and 49)						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the comprehensive learning and teaching observation process which is effectively incorporated into the College's staff appraisal system (paragraph 29)</li> </ul>	<p>Further involve learners and staff in the learning and teaching observation process; wider implementation of peer observation and learning walks with a view to promoting sharing of good practice</p> <p>Learning and teaching observation outcomes to continue to be addressed independently and as part of the appraisal process</p>	December 2013	<p>Senior Moderators</p> <p>HE Managers</p> <p>HE Learning, Teaching and Assessment Group</p>	<p>Improvement in Learning and Teaching through observation feedback and student feedback</p> <p>Evidence of improvement through reflective practice</p> <p>Sharing of good practice during staff development days</p>	<p>Senior Moderators Group</p> <p>HE managers group</p> <p>Principalship</p>	<p>Learning &amp; Teaching Observation reports</p> <p>HR reports</p> <p>Learner Voice: Satisfaction Survey</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the active inclusion of employers and private sector professionals in programme design and execution and the resulting development of innovative practice of high quality (paragraph 31)</li> </ul>	Enhance the strong strategic and operational links with employers, national and local professional networks and the vocational employability agenda to continue to provide innovative engagement of students via employer led assessment briefs and close and regular exposure to applied	April 2013	HE Managers	Increase innovative engagement on all HE programmes incorporating employers and private sector professionals	<p>HE Management</p> <p>Principalship</p>	<p>Management Review Action Plan</p> <p>Programme Validation Documentation</p>

	and professional employability skills					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the comprehensive arrangements for the recruitment and subsequent support of students from a wide variety of backgrounds which is effective in promoting the College's widening participation strategies (paragraph 32)</li> </ul>	<p>Annually review programme recruitment, delivery and support measures to meet the College's Widening Participation Strategy objectives</p> <p>Increase Internal Progression</p>	April 2013	<p>Vice Principal Curriculum Progression and Quality</p> <p>Director of HE</p>	Improved engagement and success for widening participation students	HE Management Review	IS Reports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the comprehensive involvement of students in the provision of feedback on their programmes and the thorough training of student representatives (paragraph 34)</li> </ul>	<p>Review the student feedback mechanisms to support students in further contributing in the improvement of their programme of study;</p> <p>Enhance the student representative training sessions in meeting the needs of the role of the student representative</p>	January 2013	HE Managers	<p>Students' active engagement in providing effective feedback for continued programme delivery</p> <p>Student representative training session satisfaction survey</p>	HE Management Group	<p>Student representative training session feedback analysis</p> <p>Student focus group action plans</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the combination of high quality human and</li> </ul>	Review programme requirements for resources and ensure	April 2013	Director of HE	Student Satisfaction Surveys indicate good level of	HE Quality Improvement Group;	Student Satisfaction Surveys

physical specialist resourcing in a variety of professional contexts (paragraph 43)	they are up to date and industrially relevant for the programme of study			resources	Principalship	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the comprehensive amount of information, including policies and procedures, student profiles and examples of student work which is easily accessible on the College website (paragraph 43)</li> </ul>	<p>Further development of College HE website to include more information about College courses, course performance, student survey results and staff profiles</p> <p>Consider ways to engage with all applicants rather than those who eventually decide to attend the College to get a view about the quality and appropriateness of the website</p>	January 2013	HE Managers	<p>Feedback received by students in relation to the College HE website via student voice vehicles/mechanisms</p> <p>Better informed applicants</p>	HE Quality Improvement Group	<p>College HE website</p> <p>Student Satisfaction Surveys</p> <p>Applicant satisfaction survey - if possible</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the involvement of students in the research and design process of College promotional material and the navigation process for the website</li> </ul>	<p>Continue to include students in the development of the College HE website and promotional / marketing material</p> <p>Consider other opportunities where student involvement</p>	March 2013	HE Managers	Higher level of student engagement in programme design, delivery and marketing	<p>HE Management Group</p> <p>Principalship</p> <p>Governing Body</p>	<p>Student Satisfaction Survey</p> <p>Higher rates of recruitment, success and enjoyment of studies</p>

(paragraph 48).	will promote ownership of studies, accountability and develop relevant employment skills					Higher employability levels for graduates
<b>Desirable</b>	<b>Action to be taken</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Action by</b>	<b>Success indicators</b>	<b>Reported to</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
The team considers that it is desirable for the College to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide effective student-enabled Wi-Fi facilities on all campuses. (paragraph 41)</li> </ul>	Wi-Fi facilities to be provided for students on all HE sites	September 2012	Head of IT Services	Head of IT Services to report on the completion of Wi-Fi installation to HE Management Group at September meeting	HE Management Group	Student survey and focus groups to monitor levels of student satisfaction with Wi-Fi facilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>continue the development of interactive programme handbooks to improve consistency, ensure currency and student ownership of the handbooks (paragraph 47)</li> </ul>	Ensure all programme handbooks are produced in appropriate interactive formats and have been reviewed by students with feedback acted upon accordingly	September 2012	Head of Marketing/HE Managers	Handbooks produced and uploaded to the College HE website	HE Management Group	Student Feedback

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